

Mendenhall-Valentine-Edge House
East side of State Route 340
(King's Highway), north of Edges
Mill Road (LR 15126), approximately
1.5 miles west of Downingtown
Downingtown Vicinity (Caln Township)
Chester County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-1201

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PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. PA-1201

MENDENHALL-VALENTINE-EDGE HOUSE

Location: East side of State Route 340 (King's Highway), north of Edge's Mill Road (LR 15126), approximately 1.5 miles west of Downingtown, Downingtown Vicinity (Caln Township), Chester County, Pennsylvania. (Reference: Map of Chester County [by County Commissioners] 1956).

Present Owner: Mrs. Jacob Edge, Edge's Mill, Downingtown, R.D. #1, Pa.

Brief Statement of Significance: This fine eighteenth century house has been maintained in excellent condition.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners:

1. William Penn 1698 to Thomas Musgrave et al. - 1500 acres.
2. In 1703 500 acres of the above confirmed to Hannah Musgrave Price, widow of the above Thomas Musgrave.
3. Hannah Musgrave Price 1713 to Aaron Mendenhall.
4. Aaron Mendenhall ca 1740 to James Mendenhall.
5. James Mendenhall 1762 to Robert Valentine, Sr. - mill and 50 acres.
6. Robert Valentine, Sr. 1781 to Robert Valentine, Jr.
7. James Kelton, sheriff, 1804 to Thomas and Hunt Downing.
8. Thomas Downing 1806 to Hunt Downing, his interest.
9. Hunt Downing 1831 to Joseph M. Downing.
10. Joseph M. Downing 1835 to Thomas Steel, Jr.
11. Thomas Steel, Jr. 1835 to Daniel Beaver.
12. Daniel Beaver 1839 to Charles Pusey.
13. Charles Pusey 1852 to Jacob Edge.
14. Jacob Edge 1889 to Joseph V. Edge.
15. Joseph V. Edge 1913 to Jacob Edge.
16. Jacob Edge 1945 in trust for wife and family.

2. Date of erection: House was built in three sections during the eighteenth century. The setback west wing was built circa 1721 by Aaron Mendenhall. The west two bays of the main section were built circa 1768 by Robert Valentine. The east three bays were built circa 1790 by his son. The east addition was built in 1945 by Jacob Edge.

3. Architect, builder, suppliers etc.: Unknown.

4. Original plans, construction etc.: None Known.

5. Alterations and additions: The house was built in four stages as described. Dormers were added to the 1721 wing at a later date. The house was partially restored in 1925. At this time the pent roof across the south front was restored.

6. Important old views and references:

Views: None found.

References: Clipping and manuscript files in the Chester County Historical Society under heading: Caln Twp. Lands and Caln Twp. Business Houses - Edge's Mill.
Gilbert Cope: Genealogy of the Smedley family. Lancaster, Pa. 1901.

B. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: None Known.

C. Supplemental Material

1. Clerk of Orphans Court, Court House, West Chester, Penna.
Will Book 16, page 396:

"Will of Robert Valentine of East Caln, dated 10.27.1802.

Wife Ann "shall have the two rooms in the House we now live in and She Shall have her Choice of them and She Shall have Sufficient quantity of Good fire Wood Cut & brought to the Door In Suitable Lengths for her fireplace when if the(y) refuse to Do She may have it Done and my sons pay for it...."

Executors: wife Ann & oldest sons Samuel, Robert and Jacob.

Proved March 22, 1803."

2. "American Republican", West Chester, Pa. - August 29, 1837:

"Valuable Real Estate At PUBLIC SALE.

"The Subscriber will offer at Public Sale, on Wednesday, the 25th of October, the following valuable Real Estate, viz:

"No. 1, a Large MERCHANT AND GRIST MILL, Store and Dwelling House, with about four acres of land; situated in East Caln Township, Chester County, two miles from Downingtown, in the Great Valley, 32 miles from Philadelphia, 3/4 from the Harrisburg Turnpike, and 3/4 from the Pennsylvania Rail Road and Lancaster Turnpike; bounded by lands of Elizabeth Valentine, Davis Hoopes and others. The Mill is a three story stone building, 45 by 60 feet, each story from 9 to 10 feet high, with water wheel (over shot), two run of burs-one is 4 1/2 the other 5 feet-of a good quality with the usual machinery for manufacturing merchant and country flour. The Mill, which is an excellent stand, is propelled by the waters of Beaver Creek, which afford a sufficiency of water for two wheels, if desired. The Store House and Dwelling are attached to each other, and is an excellent stand for business.

"No. 2, adjoining No. 1, is a large STONE DWELLING, Built of the best materials, 40 by 45 feet, four rooms and entry on the first floor, and five rooms and entry on the second, with a large kitchen adjoining, cellar under the whole, Barn 35 by 60 feet,

Wagon House, Gig Dearborne, and Smoke House, Spring Houses convenient, all of stone, with about 25 acres of prime Valley Land, 3 of which are well set with timber, divided into fields of convenient sizes, and under good fence.

"No. 3, adjoining No. 2 is a lot of about $3/4$ of an acre, with a Dwelling 20 by 35 feet, two rooms one the first floor, and three on the second. Also, a Smith's Shop with three furnaces in it, in a good neighborhood for business.

"No. 4, a half acre lot, on Pennsylvania Rail Road and Lancaster Turnpike, handsomely located for public business, all in the Township and County aforesaid, and in a remarkable healthy neighborhood. The above property will be sold separate, as advertised, or altogether, as may best suit purchasers.

"Persons desirous of viewing the property, previous to the day of sale, will be shown the same by the Subscriber, residing thereon.

D.H. BEAVER.

August 29, 1837

"N.B. The above described property will be sold subject to survey.

"P.S. Sale to commence at 12 o'clock, M. when attendance will be given, and conditions made known by D.H.B."

3. "American Republican", 8-25-1846:

MILL AND STORE AT PRIVATE SALE.

"The subscriber wishes to sell at Private Sale, the property situate in East Caln township, Chester county, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of Downingtown, on the old Lancaster road, adjoining land of D. Hoopes and others, containing about 28 Acres of Land.

"The improvements consist of a large Stone House with Kitchen attached, Stone Mill 40 by 60 feet, with two run of stones, and machinery for either merchant or grist work, Barn, Wagon House, Smoke House and Spring House, all built of stone.

"The Store House with a Dwelling attached is also of stone. A good business is and may be done at either mill or store--the situation being equal to any in the county for either business.

"For further particulars enquire of the subscriber residing on the property.

CHARLES PUSEY.

"East Caln, 8th mo 25 -- 3mpd"

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural Character: This house, although altered, is of interest because it was built in three stages during the eighteenth century.
2. Condition of Fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The main house is 41'-6" (five-bay front) by 35'-6" with a setback side wing to the west measuring 24' -6" (two-bay front) by 23' -9". The main house has two-and-a-half stories with a one-and-a-half-story wing.
2. Foundations: Stone.
3. Wall construction: Random rubble with quoins.
4. Chimneys: There are three brick chimneys. The chimney in the west gable end of the wing is similar in support to the west chimney at the 1704 Brinton House. A large arch supports the chimney in the north wall. The cellar under the east chimney is not dug out.
5. Openings
 - a. Doorways and doors: Door openings seem original. Original north (back) door was lowered and changed when the north wing was built.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Windows in the basement and first floor, south and west walls, are arched. One second floor window to the north has been bricked up, and two windows to the west have been enlarged.
6. Roof
 - a. Shape, covering: Medium pitch, gable roofs.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Pent roof restored in 1925.
 - c. Dormers: Originally none; dormers added to kitchen wing.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: By the 1790's the house had a large center hall with two rooms on either side and a large kitchen wing.
2. Stairways: Original as of circa 1790.
3. Flooring: Mostly original.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster.
5. Doorways and doors: Mostly original.
6. Trim: Mostly original; dining room fireplace removed.
7. Hardware: Fair amount is original.
8. Lighting: Modern electricity.
9. Heating: Two original fireplaces removed.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: House faces south in a beautiful setting with wooded hills as a background.
2. Enclosures: Pale fence.
3. Outbuildings: Numerous outbuildings.
4. Walks, driveways: Nothing formally laid out.
5. Landscaping, gardens: Very fine.

Prepared by Bart Anderson - May 1959
Curator, Chester County Historical Society